

applicant intends the underlining and/or bracketing to appear in the issued patent. The substance of the interview must be made of record. The above form paragraph restarting the time period should only be used in such cases where the examiner is unable to obtain clarification from the applicant by telephone.

5. This form paragraph should not be used in a reissue application or a reexamination proceeding.

608.01(n) Dependent Claims

I. MULTIPLE DEPENDENT CLAIMS

37 CFR 1.75. Claim(s).

(c) One or more claims may be presented in dependent form, referring back to and further limiting another claim or claims in the same application. Any dependent claim which refers to more than one other claim ("multiple dependent claim") shall refer to such other claims in the alternative only. A multiple dependent claim shall not serve as a basis for any other multiple dependent claim. For fee calculation purposes under § 1.16, a multiple dependent claim will be considered to be that number of claims to which direct reference is made therein. For fee calculation purposes, also, any claim depending from a multiple dependent claim will be considered to be that number of claims to which direct reference is made in that multiple dependent claim. In addition to the other filing fees, any original application which is filed with, or is amended to include, multiple dependent claims must have paid therein the fee set forth in § 1.16(d). Claims in dependent form shall be construed to include all the limitations of the claim incorporated by reference into the dependent claim. A multiple dependent claim shall be construed to incorporate by reference all the limitations of each of the particular claims in relation to which it is being considered.

Generally, a multiple dependent claim is a dependent claim which refers back in the alternative to more than one preceding independent or dependent claim.

The second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112 has been revised in view of the multiple dependent claim practice introduced by the Patent Cooperation Treaty. Thus 35 U.S.C. 112 authorizes multiple dependent claims in applications filed on and after January 24, 1978, as long as they are in the alternative form (e.g., "A machine according to claims 3 or 4, further comprising ---"). Cumulative claiming (e.g., "A machine according to claims 3 and 4, further comprising ---") is not permitted. A multiple dependent claim may refer in the alternative to only one set of claims. A claim such as "A device as in claims 1, 2, 3, or 4, made by a process of claims 5, 6, 7, or 8" is improper. 35 U.S.C. 112 allows reference to only a particular claim. Furthermore, a multiple dependent claim may not serve as a basis for any other multiple dependent claim, either directly or indirectly. These limitations help to avoid undue confusion in determining how many prior claims are actually referred to in a multiple dependent claim.

A multiple dependent claim which depends from another multiple dependent claim should be objected to by using Form Paragraph 7.45.

¶ 7.45 Improper Multiple Dependent Claims

Claim [1] objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim [2]. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claim [3] not been further treated on the merits.

Examiner Note

1. In bracket 2, insert --should refer to other claims in the alternative only--, and/or, --cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim--.

2. Use this paragraph rather than 35 U.S.C. 112, fifth paragraph.

3. In bracket 3, insert --has-- or --s have--.

Assume each claim example given below is from a different application.

A. Acceptable Multiple Dependent Claim Wording

Claim 5. A gadget according to claims 3 or 4, further comprising ---

Claim 5. A gadget as in any one of the preceding claims, in which ---

Claim 3. A gadget as in either claim 1 or claim 2, further comprising ---

Claim 4. A gadget as in claim 2 or 3, further comprising ---

Claim 16. A gadget as in claims 1, 7, 12, or 15, further comprising ---

Claim 5. A gadget as in any of the preceding claims, in which ---

Claim 8. A gadget as in one of claims 4-7, in which ---

Claim 5. A gadget as in any preceding claim, in which ---

Claim 10. A gadget as in any of claims 1-3 or 7-9, in which ---

Claim 11. A gadget as in any one of claims 1, 2, or 7-10 inclusive, in which ---

B. Unacceptable Multiple Dependent Claim Wording

1. Claim Does Not Refer Back in the Alternative Only

Claim 5. A gadget according to claim 3 and 4, further comprising ---

Claim 9. A gadget according to claims 1-3, in which ---

Claim 9. A gadget as in claims 1 or 2 and 7 or 8, which ---

Claim 6. A gadget as in the preceding claims in which ---

Claim 6. A gadget as in claims 1, 2, 3, 4 and/or 5, in which ---

Claim 10. A gadget as in claims 1-3 or 7-9, in which ---

2. Claim Does Not Refer to a Preceding Claim

Claim 3. A gadget as in any of the following claims, in which ---

Claim 5. A gadget as in either claim 6 or claim 8, in which ---

3. Reference to Two Sets of Claims to Different Features

Claim 9. A gadget as in claim 1 or 4 made by the process of claims 5, 6, 7, or 8, in which ---

4. Reference Back to Another Multiple Dependent Claim

Claim 8. A gadget as in claim 5 (claim 5 is a multiple dependent claim) or claim 7, in which ---

35 U.S.C. 112 indicates that the limitations or elements of each claim incorporated by

reference into a multiple dependent claim must be considered separately. Thus, a multiple dependent claim, as such, does not contain all the limitations of all the alternative claims to which it refers, but rather contains in any one embodiment only those limitations of the particular claim referred to for the embodiment under consideration. Hence, a multiple dependent claim must be considered in the same manner as a plurality of single dependent claims.

C. Restriction Practice

For restriction purposes, each embodiment of a multiple dependent claim is considered in the same manner as a single dependent claim. Therefore, restriction may be required between the embodiments of a multiple dependent claim. Also, some embodiments of a multiple dependent claim may be held withdrawn while other embodiments are considered on their merits.

D. Handling of Multiple Dependent Claims by the Office of Initial Patent Examination

The Office of Initial Patent Examination (OIPE) is responsible for verifying whether multiple dependent claims filed with the application are in proper alternative form, that they depend only upon prior independent or single dependent claims and also for calculating the amount of the filing fee. A new form, PTO-1360, has been designed to be used in conjunction with the current fee calculation form PTO-875.

E. Handling of Multiple Dependent Claims by the Examining Group Technical Support Staff

The examining group technical support staff is responsible for verifying compliance